

I am writing this letter out of concern regarding the proposal to further relax restrictions on station ownership. Since 1996, stations have been increasingly consolidated into fewer and fewer hands. Consolidation of station ownership poses a direct threat to the viability of American democracy, and that is not an exaggeration. Relaxing these laws further may benefit the industry, or station owners in several ways, but these gains are far outweighed by the harm that will come to society as a whole.

The increased political power and influence -- with diminished threat of competition -- wielded by those who own increasingly large chunks of the media is a direct threat to our free and open society. I respectfully urge you to not only to reject this idea of allowing further consolidation of American media, but also to investigate the idea of breaking up current monopolies by returning to the pre 1996 standards.

Mary Lehti